



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0403FL-2 for School Board of Pinellas County

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant sets forth an adequate reform vision statement that articulates how it plans to increase student achievement especially by further enhancing the use of technology within the district.</p> <p>-Its current data management system, Local Instructional Improvement System (LIIS), will allow key stakeholders access to student data in order to support student growth; LIIS will integrate established data systems funded by Race To the Top State such as Student Information System, Personalized Student Profiles, Learning Management System, and adaptive Instructional Resources so that stakeholders can have access to data at the classroom, school and district levels</p> <p>-Applicant will partner with St. Petersburg College to further develop and integrate the College and Career Ready Planning component of their data system</p> <p>The applicant does not address how the proposed project will address all aspects of the four core educational assurances.</p> <p>-Did not address how vision will enable students to compete in a global economy</p> <p>-Did not address how vision will support effective principals</p> <p>-Did not address how vision will recruit and retain effective teachers and principals</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates a thoughtful approach to implementing the proposal's reform policies by providing a well-documented account of how participating schools meet the eligibility requirements and were selected to participate in the proposed project.</p> <p>-Pinellas County departments including Health and Human Services, Justice and Consumer Services, Community Development, Economic Development, Code Enforcement, and Planning identified five at-risk communities with 16% or more of their population living at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level</p> <p>-These targeted communities have lower educational attainment, lower wages and higher rates of incarceration and homelessness</p> <p>The applicant provides a detailed comprehensive list of all of the schools who will participate in the proposal activities and the total number of participating students as required by the grant from 31 schools.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal includes a detailed comprehensive logic model that includes goals, activities, outcomes and indicators for project activities.</p> <p>-Under "Outcomes" the applicant states that the Lowest Achieving Schools will increase student Achievement, improve graduation rates and eventually exit from improvement status</p> <p>The district presents a basic overview that includes the number of feeder schools that will incorporate project activities every</p>		

year after the grant has been implemented. However, the plan lacks any specific details or descriptions regarding how this scale up process will be implemented.

-Although the application includes some details about the plan will be scaled up in criterion F.2, the applicant neglects to describe how these scale up plans will be executed and financed after RTTD funds expire in the narrative for A.3.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides adequate data for each participating school that demonstrates how proposed activities will improve student learning outcomes and close the achievement gap.

-Standardized reading scores will increase in all subgroups between 3 to 4% each year

-Graduation rates will increase by 5% each year

-The 2011/12 reading deficiency spread of 40% will be reduced to 25% by 2015/16

However, some of the applicant's performance goals for certain subgroups are elusive.

-The applicant predicts an increase of 22% in the aggregate math proficiency scores for Natives American target schools from 2011/12 to 2012/13; whereas Blacks, Asians and Hispanics have an average increase of 2% to 6%; no explanation for why the disproportional increase in scores for Native Americans is provided

-White proficiency math scores decrease from 61% to 8.33% for the same time period; this decrease in performance does not support the overall vision of the project

The applicant's goals for increasing college enrollment are not adequately ambitious.

-Table 6 Chart indicates that the college enrollment rate will increase by 3% annually; however, the totals in the chart indicate a 0 to 1% annually during the cycle of the grant and one year post grant

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	9

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has demonstrated limited success in providing evidence of a clear record of success in advancing student learning outcomes.

-The data provided by the applicant demonstrates that the district did not meet the majority of its own LEA goals in the areas of Graduation Rate, College Going Rate, College Credit Earning Rate and Percent of 9th Graders Who Eventually Earn at Least a Year's Worth of College Credit from 2006 to 2011. For example, in 2009 their LEA goal for students attending college was 68%; but only 61% met this indicator

-The applicant provides charts indicating how it's lowest performing schools scored individually in areas such as "instructional coaches" and "technical assistance and support" as a result of its Safety Net Program; however the applicant fails to include a narrative explaining how reforms dealing with these areas in this program lead to school wide improvements

-Similarly the applicant includes reports revealing a significant decrease in student disciplinary infractions; however an explanation of how this reduction was accomplished is not included

-The applicant includes a detailed description of its Centers of Excellence academies instituted in 2007; however, the district fails to provide performance based data to demonstrate the success of these programs; as a result, the applicant fails to prove they achieved ambitious and significant results

-Table 7's display of the district's graduation rates does not demonstrate significant success in closing the achievement gap in regards to graduation rates between black and white students between 2008 to 2011; the annual gain of 20.4%, 20.5% and 21.69 respectively is diminutive

The applicant describes how a student data base called the "Student Information System" is available on the school district website; however, it is unclear if this data base informs stakeholders of participation, instruction and services as required by sub criterion B.1.c

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district demonstrates evidence of high transparency of LEA funding in regards to staff salaries and school level expenditures in their compliance with the Florida Educational Funding Accountability Act which was established to provide accountability and transparency based upon data submitted by each school in the district. A link to this report is located on the district's website.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant successfully demonstrates appropriate state statutory conditions and adequate legal autonomy in regards to implementing the proposed project in Florida.</p> <p>-Statute 1002.3105 requires districts to offer "subject matter acceleration" and "virtual instruction in higher grade level subjects" which aligns with the major tenets of the district's proposal of implementing digitalized personal learning instruction</p> <p>-Statute 1003.4281 allows students to graduate early if certain academic requirements are met; the personalized learning proposed in the applicant proposal will facilitate this process</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	4
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has demonstrated some success in establishing meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the project.</p> <p>-Principals at the targeted 31 school met to provide a needs analysis for the program design</p> <p>-Over 500 teachers and staff took a needs gap survey to illicit feedback which was then used to shape program development</p> <p>However, the applicant fails to provide recent evidence that students and families were engaged in the development of the current proposal.</p> <p>-Collaborative Labs were held in 2009-2010 to get input from community members and parents for other grant competitions; however, the applicant fails to demonstrate how students and parents were involved in the development of the current proposal</p> <p>Although the president of the teacher's bargaining unit signed the Application's Assurances form, the applicant fails to convincingly prove that the local teacher's union had direct engagement with the development of the proposal.</p> <p>-The applicant quotes that "Representatives from PCTA have been invited to participate in the ongoing meetings related to development of the project plan" but the applicant fails to state if the representatives actually attended any of those meeting and participated in them.</p> <p>The applicant provides numerous letters of support from various members of the business community, but the majority were identical cover letters</p> <p>-As a result, it is difficult to discern their authentic level of support</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant developed a sound plan to access the current status of the district's personalized learning environment

- An extensive needs gap survey was administered to administrators, teachers and staff to gather input about needs for targeted schools

The applicant successfully includes a description of the logic utilized to frame the needs and gaps the proposal addresses.

- The University of West Florida's The Haas Center for Business Research and Economic Development conducted an economic needs analysis for the Pinellas County to identify educational reforms that would support local business and economic growth.

## C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	11
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district will utilize an "Academy" model as the framework for their plan to improve teaching and learning. The applicant convincingly argues that this model will empower students by providing relevant college and career options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-These smaller learning communities which focus on a particular career option or theme; development of these pathways should positively increase college and career readiness and increase the graduation rate</li> </ul> <p>The district's proposed strategy to establish Personal Learner Files for every student in the targeted schools should positively assist students in establishing goals linked to college and career ready standards and graduation requirements.</p> <p>The small cohort nature of Academies should provide appropriate environments for students to establish strong relationships with teachers which will contribute to the development of deep learning experiences.</p> <p>Since students are grouped in Academies based on a shared interest, the curriculum executed within the Academy should provide more relevance to students' interest.</p> <p>Certain aspects of the proposal's plan lack sufficient detail.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The applicant fails to provide ample details about how parents will support students within this Academy framework.</li> <li>-The proposal contains a graphic organizer (Figure 6) that describes a range of digital based learning options; however, it is unclear how these learning models will be integrated into the targeted schools' Academy framework</li> <li>-The applicant's explanation regarding how students will receive regular and ongoing feedback is vague and lacks details</li> </ul> <p>The proposal's description of its approach to learning fails to address how students will have access and exposure to diverse cultures and contexts.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	12
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district's Professional Development System has the potential to provide the foundation to capacity build among its teachers and principals to increase their ability to support student performance toward meeting college and career readiness standards.</p> <p>The applicant provides a list of relevant areas of concentration for staff professional development which overlaps with the mandated training topics required in sub criterion (a)i –iv including differentiated learning modalities, the use of data to inform practice, and personalized learning environments.</p> <p>According to the proposal's professional development plan, each school will develop a specialized professional development plan with an education consultant. The personalization of teachers' professional development should enhance their effectiveness and lead to improved student academic outcomes.</p> <p>Sections of the applicant's professional development plan are underdeveloped and too vague.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The scheduling of the vast majority of the professional development activities during the projects five year period are listed as taking place January, 2013, June 2013, August 2013, and "ongoing". It is unclear if the professional growth activities will</li> </ul>		

effectively impact teachers' abilities to increase student achievement.

The applicant fails to address how information from the district's teacher and principal evaluation systems will inform teacher and administrative effectiveness.

The proposal also fails to address specifically how the district will increase the number of students receiving effective teachers in hard to staff schools and specialty areas.

## D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant convincingly describes how the district's organizational structure provides proper support for project implementation.</p> <p>-The organizational chart provided by the applicant provides a sound framework for delivering district level support for the targeted schools</p> <p>-Positions such as the Executive Director for Career, Technical and Adult Education will provide suitable support for the technical aspects of the proposed project</p> <p>Strategic School Board policy will afford school administrators the autonomy and flexibility they need to make key decisions to implement the proposal.</p> <p>-District level protocols are already in place that will allow targeted schools the ability to make decisions about budgets, timelines evaluations and determining projected outcomes</p> <p>The applicant convincingly describes how the district's organizational structure provides proper support for project implementation.</p> <p>-The organizational chart provided by the applicant provides a sound framework for delivering district level support for the targeted schools</p> <p>-Positions such as the Executive Director for Career, Technical and Adult Education will provide suitable support for the technical aspects of the proposed project</p> <p>Strategic School Board policy will afford school administrators the autonomy and flexibility they need to make key decisions to implement the proposal.</p> <p>-District level protocols are already in place that will allow targeted schools the ability to make decisions about budgets, timelines evaluations and determining projected outcomes</p> <p>The district presents numerous means in which students can progress and earn credits; however, the applicant states that the district will have to apply to Florida's Department of Education to waive minimum hour requirements for high school credit.</p> <p>-The applicant seems confident that this exemption is achievable</p> <p>The proposal requires all students to have a Personalized Learning Plan which will integrate a process for demonstrating mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways.</p> <p>-Although the applicant made this claim, the plan lacks specific details explaining how it will conduct such an ambitious task</p> <p>The applicant lists an extensive variety of services and departments that will be made available to teachers who work with students with special needs like English Language Learners and students with disabilities</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		

The applicant provides a sound plan for ensuring that all participating students and parents have access to digital technology necessary to support their blended learning model.

-A recently passed state statute requires school districts to establish virtual instruction options for students; this legislation aligns with the technical goals of the proposed project

-The district's Networking and Telecommunications Department is partnering with telecommunication companies to provide low cost computers and internet services to low income students and parents

The applicant does not address how the proposal will ensure that stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support.

The applicant presents an innovative plan to grant students permission to utilize their own technology, like cell phones and lap tops, at school in order to allow students to have access to the information systems that will be integrated into the learning programs.

-District is willing to change school policy in order to allow students to bring their own technical device

District is also keen to shift from paper textbook adoption to digital learning. This policy shift will positively enhance the participating school's transition to electronic learning

The applicant does not address how the schools will utilize interoperable data systems.

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	9
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Many aspects of the proposal's plan for continuous improvement will be modeled after processes that already exist in the district. The continuance of best practices should provide sound feedback for program improvement.</p> <p>- Participating schools will continue to develop School Improvement Plans based on data generated by the project to develop and improve budgets, calendars, professional development, and action plans</p> <p>The applicant specifies how certain types of data will be employed and structures created to enhance teachers' capacity to make ongoing improvements to achieve increased student performance.</p> <p>- Indicators such as assessments, absenteeism, language delay and retention will be integrated into the student's Personalized Learning Profile and will shape appropriate interventions from K-12</p> <p>-Data coaches will be responsible for conducting school needs assessment, data analysis and reporting, professional development, school based data discussions, and action research with each classroom teacher; in addition, they will work directly with the district research specialist to build a cohesive plan to support personalized learning in the 31 targeted schools</p> <p>- In regards to professional development, the applicant states that teachers will participate in a process called "Plan-Do-Study-Act"; this protocol should help teachers develop an inquiry based approach to assessing their practice</p> <p>Overall, the applicant's plan for continuous monitoring and improvements is vague.</p> <p>- Although the proposal states that a project manager will work with project staff, district leadership, and schools "to ensure progress monitoring occurs on a quarterly basis and that the project implementation is occurring as planned", the plans does not include any information regarding how the proposed professional development and interventions or work by the data coaches will be evaluated to ensure their effectiveness.</p> <p>-Although the applicant states that the project manager will work with schools on a quarterly basis, there are no other timeframes that specifies the frequency for monitoring the projects goals or for making ongoing program improvements</p> <p>The plan does not address how the district will publicly share information on the quality of RTTD investments.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The applicant's communication plan is based on well-established practices on the district level.

-The Office of Strategic Communications and Office of Strategic Partnerships will collaborate to ensure information is disseminated to all departments, schools and key stakeholders

-The Public Information Officer will facilitate public relations in regards to the RTTD grant activities via the media through press releases and video opportunities.

The district will utilize traditional communications resources such as newsletters, a television broadcasts, the district website, parent guides, and weekly videotaped message from the district Superintendent.

The applicant did not include school level (site based) communication plans.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes extensive data which highlight 12 performance measures. These measures reasonably fulfill the required performance measures based on the applicable population as required in criterion E.3. However, some of the charts contain inconsistent data that seemingly does not align with the applicant's performance measures of ongoing improvement and some of the charts are missing data.

-The performance measures measuring FCAT scores for reading and math performance for grades 4 to 8 show peak levels in 2015 then decline in the following two years. This significant drop is inconsistent with the overall projected performance trends.

-The table submitted to measure student readiness for college and career for grades 9-12 does not have required subgroups.

- The table submitted to measure the numbers who completed FAFSA does not contain any data.

In addition, the applicant neglected to provide a rationale for selection of the project's performance measures, how the measures will provide formative information tailored to its overall plan and how it will review and improve the measures over time if it is insufficient

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

4

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a general descriptive outline of the evaluation plan. An evaluation team comprised of the program coordinator, school leadership teams and program staff will meet quarterly to review short, medium and long term goals. Capacity to provide summative and formative evaluation for this project internally is generally described and includes six measures that the evaluation team will use to collect baseline data.

Besides assessment scores, the evaluation plan does not include a description of other data it will collect to assess the quality of the proposed plan.

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
Overall, the applicant presents a budget that correlates well with the span of the proposed project. The projected costs for the plan seem reasonable and sufficient to the anticipated scope of work.		
The applicant provides a description of all of the funding needs for the plan's various projects and identifies if they are one time or ongoing costs. In addition, a thorough rationale was included for key project positions such as the need for 8 Systems Navigators.		
Each of the participating schools will develop a scope of work which will determine their program and technological needs. However, the estimates given for their supplies and digital needs seem reasonable.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes general plans for sustaining the project goals after the grant.

-Other school funding sources such as Title I, School Improvement Grant and Race To The Top State resources will be reallocated

-The applicant claims that the Career Education Board and the Pinellas Education Foundation will contribute to sustaining the project; however, the application does not provide evidence of this support

The proposal includes a reasonable post grant budget chart that demonstrates how the project will phase out certain costs like equipment and consultancy fees. These changes will make the sustainability of the project more feasible.

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	6

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a plan to support the social, emotional and behavioral needs of participating students. The core of the plan centers around five community centers located at the district's high needs schools. After an in-depth needs analysis with surveys and other inventory tools is implemented, the district will partner with appropriate service providers to administer needed social services to students at participating schools. The applicant presents extensive experience in partnering with local community service providers. The proposal includes several letters of support from service providers who enthusiastically endorse the program and are willing to commit resources and services. For instance, Healthy Start Coalition has committed to providing needs analysis and social services.

The proposal includes 10 meaningful performance measures that aim for ambitious student outcomes and aligns with their broader goals. The vast majority of the applicant's measures focus on social emotional behavioral needs such as lowering the rates of substance abuse, bullying, truancy and discipline referrals. School readiness is the only educational outcome mentioned.

All of the applicant's student performance measures provided for Criterion E.3 includes targets for students with special needs including special education students, emotionally disturbed students and English language learners.

The applicant does not address how it will scale up or improve results over time for the integrated services component of its proposal.

Although the applicant describes how five community centers will provide community services, the proposal lacks detail regarding how services provided by partners will be integrated at all of the participating schools.

The proposal does not include plans for the creation of a decision making process which involves parents and other stakeholders that would identify student needs, problem solve, identify annual performance measures and provide a mechanism for program improvement over time.

## Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Overall, this applicant meets Absolute Priority 1. The proposal addresses how the district will infuse a School Wide Enrichment Model in the participating elementary schools and implement an "Academy" model in its low performing middle and high



schools to create learning environments that are personalized and help students become college and career ready. These models, if implemented well, should accelerate student achievement, deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student and increase the effectiveness of educators. The proposal's focus on increasing teacher professional development should expand student access to more effective educators and decrease the achievement gaps across student groups. Implementation of the plan's blended digital learning should personalize student learning and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

Total

210

149



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0403FL-3 for School Board of Pinellas County

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Pinellas County Schools outlines a comprehensive and coherent vision of personalized learning through the creation of the Academies of Pinellas focusing on students within the five at-risk communities in their service area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presented an understandable definition for personalized learning (individualization + differentiation + leveraging student inter test/experiences)</li> <li>Listed several options on blended learning opportunities to address student choice/interest</li> <li>Detailed plans for elementary, middle and high school academies to facilitate a k-12 systems initiative</li> <li>Strong emphasis of professional development for teachers and leaders to ensure implementation of the model</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lacked a clear connection on how the academies would address accelerating student achievement and deepening student learning</li> <li>The research included on Career Academy Model and School Wide Engagement Model was from 2-3 decades ago.</li> <li>Did not include whether students, parents and community members were included in the cross-functional team in the development of the project.</li> </ul>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Good utilization of current data by aligning participating schools/communities to the May 2012 Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners 2012 Workshop Session: The Economic Impact of Poverty. This mutual choice should result in a collaborative approach in addressing the life-long effects of poverty. Targeting 32,838 students is an ambitious project.</p> <p>In the description of the process used to select schools to participate, the only source described was the May 2012 Pinellas County workshop report. There was no evidence that community members within the five communities were involved in the selection.</p>		

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The timeline presented during and after the grant period is easy to understand and logical with the plan of replicating the academies model by feeder school patterns.</p> <p>The relationship between a new academies model and the desired outcome of improved student learning is ambiguous. It is unclear how this change will produce early results in improving student achievement through a reflection of student behavior. There was no description or clear link of how the academies plan aligned with the Career and Professional Education Act, nor how the graduation rate will be increased or exceeded by 1% each year through the alignment of resources of the business community and school district.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Pinellas County Schools provided ambitious goals to increase student achievement, graduation rates and college enrollment for all students and ethnicities. However, only the graduation rate and college enrollment rate charts included goals for students with disabilities, ELL and economically disadvantaged students. Without specific assessment goals throughout a student's education, it is unlikely he/she will be on target to graduate, nor be prepared for college enrollment. It is unclear how monitoring AMOs and a review of initiatives will result in an expected decrease in the achievement gap. No plan was included if monitoring the AMOs and the review of initiatives does not result in the anticipated decrease in the achievement gap. The table with Florida's AMOs was missing to be able to evaluate whether the LEA's goals meet or exceed the state ESEA targets.</p>		

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Information provided in the (A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change section indicated full implementation in a total of 112 schools. Information provided within this section indicates that there are 142 schools in the district.</p> <p>The previous "Career Academy Success" that has spread to 16 Centers of Excellence indicate PCS's strong commitment to an existing personalized education for students, that included certifications in 21st Century careers. However, there was no indication whether the Centers of Excellence would continue, or be re-tooled under the Academies of Pinellas. There was no discussion whether the Centers of Excellence were located in the five at-risk communities that are the target for the RTTT-D grant start-up.</p> <p>Steady and impressive gains were detailed in the four high schools under the SIG Grant. Details regarding successful reforms at the elementary and middle school levels was missing, other than iClass Learning Centers at Fairmont Park Elementary.</p> <p>PCS has achieved steady gains in graduation rates for all groups listed. Again, there was no data provided for students with disabilities, ELL, or FRL.</p> <p>The current use of Active Directory provides seamless access to all users of technology. Complete information regarding successful activities during the past four years to provide access to student performance data was not included in the application.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Sufficient transparency practices currently exist with the FDE report available on the PCS website.</p>		

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided evidence for successful conditions under Florida's requirement to implement the academies grant with fidelity. Progress regarding PCS's waiver application to minimum hour requirement for high school credit will be necessary to allow complete personalization of instruction goals.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	9
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Information was provided regarding the innovative and creative Collaboration Labs included relevant stakeholders; however, the engagement was held three years ago - 2009-2010. The economic and social conditions may have significantly changed for communities and families during the past three years.</p> <p>The staff survey conducted throughout the RTTT-D prospective schools was comprehensive, including the listing of each response. The inclusion of the multiple comments submitted by the respondent that repeated his/her dissatisfaction with RTT indicated that PCS was willing to hear and consider all input. However, current engagement activities presented in the application did not include current student/families input for the RTTT-D application.</p> <p>Excellent representation from multiple stakeholders within the approximate 20 letter of support. PCS reached out to include a broad base of entities and organizations in preparation for the RTT-D Grant application.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There was no information on the number of participants within the cross-functional team, nor the mention of the inclusion of students/families in the process. It was unclear if the Academy Model School Conference is a PCS created event, or a national organization event. The conclusion of the needs assessment revealed that personalized learning is disconnected. There was no evidence presented regarding the current personalized activities and programs within PCS. The applicant did not include information regarding addressing internal policy issues to implement personalized learning, such as flexible scheduling, cohort scheduling, common planning, and increased technical staff support in preparation for the implementation of personalized learning.</p> <p>The Florida Feasibility Study and Gap Analysis for Centers of Excellence and Career Technical High Schools report, although five years old, was informative and provided a great spring board for PCS's academies proposal. However, there was no indication or inclusion of information within the logic presented regarding how the academies address college readiness.</p>		

### C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	14
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>PCS's commitment to adjust policies in student assignment and transportation to accommodate student choice is to be commended. The continuum of blended learning models is ambitious and will be welcomed by students.</p> <p>Although the plan includes academic academies and an emphasis on student choice, there is scant mention of college-ready standards or college-ready graduation requirements within the academies framework.</p> <p>The middle school pre-academies framework appears to require students to select a college track, career track, or themed track. There was no evidence in the application indicating the opportunity for students to change academies from year-to-year.</p> <p>The academies implementation process includes a school-needs assessment by the school leadership team, without any</p>		

apparent input from students/families. Student/family input is critical in the needs assessment to assure that parents in at-risk communities have a voice in creating a culture of high expectations for all subpopulation be fostered under the new academies framework.

The application does not include evidence of a learning approach for high-need students in an age-appropriate manner. The application does include a strong plan to provide ongoing and regular feedback. There was no mention of inclusion of access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives to motivate and deepen individual student learning.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	14
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The four-year Professional Development Secondary School Plan plan that includes goals, activities, timeline, deliverables and responsible parties was extensive and ambitious. The scaffold approach of building from conceptual understanding, to methodology of skills, to effective use of resources and tools is a sound approach for a successful implementation and sustainability of the personalized learning model. The focus of the activities revolves around career and workforce strategies with only one notation of the transitions to post-secondary education. The elementary professional development approach indicated that at the conceptual understanding phase will be immediately followed by the implementation phase.

The application was lacking an in-depth coverage of improving teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the evaluation system. There was no discussion of a plan to increase effective and highly effective teachers and leaders. Overall there was not a over-arching theme in aligning training, measuring progress, evaluations, resources or data to meet college- and career-ready graduation requirements. As was noted in previous comment sections, there was no mention of a plan to provide accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students. It is understood that the targeted schools, all located in at risk communities, include a large percentage of high-need students.

## D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

PCS has presented a high-quality plan to support the Academies project implementation related to policies and infrastructure. The organizational chart demonstrated a well-organized district that provides a multi-level framework of support for schools. The requirement of flexibility was addressed through the existing site-based management structure. The State of Florida has taken a leading role in the nation through policy and statute adoption to provide LEA's the structure to allow students to earn credits through mastery, rather than the traditional seat time. This section of the application provided an in-depth discussion detailing the support of students with disabilities and ELL students.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

PCS's plan to provide appropriate infrastructure to ensure access to a continuum of learners (students, parents, educators and other stakeholders) was addressed through a brief explanation of the Digital Learning Centers, which only included the use by students. The second plan regarding the investigation of providing more economical access of internet and devices was targeted for FRL students. There does not appear to be a comprehensive plan to address the needs of the continuum of technology users. There was no discussion of technical support, or the use of information technology systems to allow the export of information in an open data format. Lastly, the requirement of the use of an interoperable data system was not addressed in the application.

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score

(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The PCS plan for continuous improvement includes annual School Improvement Plans and Scope of Work for implementation of the Academies project. Although formative and benchmark assessments were mentioned, specific details were not included in the application, such as the type of assessments, frequency, and interventions planned when students are not at progressing at level. The applicant described the aggregation of data to create a personalized learning profile in the overall goal of a personalized learning model. The data will be made available to various school staff; however, the next steps, remediation or acceleration, are not covered.</p> <p>The reorganization of the need to improve the access to summative data for the early grades is an issue that most districts face. Florida has chosen to align with PARCC, which will provide K-12 internationally benchmarked assessments.</p> <p>The PCS application did not include specific information on the plan to publicly share information on the equability of its investments funded by the grant.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>PCS, through the Office of Strategic Communications (OSC) and Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP), has a robust, two-way communication system in place for internal and external communications. The Office of Strategis Partnerships formalizes relationships between the district, schools and communities in an effort to attract additional resources to support student success. The two offices, OSC and OSP, have a history of collaboration on various projects.</p> <p>The OSC currently works with all departments and school to disseminate clear and consisten messages to all stakeholders. Existing communication systems include a <i>Friday Update</i> newsletter to all board trustees, a <i>Monday Update</i> newsletter to all staff, school messenger telecommunication with parents, WPDS TV-14 licensed to PCS since 1988, district web site, parent and media guides and a weekly videotaped message from the superintendent. The OSC has created an advisory group to solicit input regarding communication issues and projects.</p> <p>PCS's previous and current experience in communication and engagement with the existing RTT, SIG, TIF grants and the new teacher evaluation system will be an asset in facilitating the communication and engagement of the RTT-D grant.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The PCS application includes more than adequate performance measures that include ambitious, yet achievable goals. The application did not include PCS's rationale for selecting each measure, i.e., why was SAT selected over ACT for a college readiness assessment. An explanation of PERT, which was listed as a college- and career-readiness assessment, would have been helpful. The PCS application did to include how the district will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gage implementation progress. The purpose of collecting data is to provide information on progress and to guide adjustments in the process.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The RTT-D project manager, along with leadership teams and project staff will work with the research specialist to implement the evaluation and report on results. Continuous improvement will be driven by the data provided by the project manager. The evaluation will include formative data regarding the implementation of the components of the program and summative data including graduation rate, FCAT scores, achievement gap, absenteeism, bullying an discipline rates and referrals was to be presented at the conclusion of the project.</p>		

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score

(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The comprehensive budget presented in section XI does not include specific information regarding the identification of all funds that will support the project. This is a major weakness.</p> <p>The amount requested appears to be reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of PCS's Academies proposal to be implemented within 31 K-12 schools. PCS has provided a clear and thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities. Observations:</p> <p>Table 4-1 - Industry certification. No information was provided explaining the rationale for the district covering the cost of multiple tests, nor the availability of a readiness pre-test to reduce the cost.</p> <p>Table 4-3 - The Academies proposal is innovative and will provide personalized learning opportunities for all students within the denitrified 31 K-12 schools. The schools have large populations with many staff members.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Pinellas Education Foundation, in particular, demonstrates an incredible vision and commitment that PCS has earned throughout the decades. The RTT-D grant funding cycle will bring systemic changes to PCS through personalized learning academies. The scale up of the academies project to the remaining 81 schools will surely require a continuation of Academy and SEM needs assessments, conferences and contracted consultants. Although capacity will be built during the RTT-D grant funding cycle, the remaining 81 schools will also need to experience the steps and process to building capacity within their specific sites.</p>		

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a strong approach in addressing the non-academic barriers to learning and the social emotional needs of students, especially for high-need students and communities. The applicant proposes to strengthen relationships among schools, agencies, and the community to improve services; identify and develop services to support families and students so students can focus on learning; and provide opportunities for coordination of services at one location increasing access to services. There are existing collaborative relationships with many community entities and providers.</p> <p>The applicant details a four-step process: gap analysis of current services provided to identify specific areas of need; partner with providers to provide five full-service school cluster areas; professional development for school staff focused on social emotional learning;</p> <p>The two-fold gap analysis of determining where the system succeeds and fails to positively impact student learning, provided further evidence. The plans were comprehensive; however, there was no inclusion of the description of the coherent and sustainable partnerships PCS has already formed with agencies and entities. The application identifies the need for professional development as the fourth step. The Plan, Do, Study, Act (PSDA) process promises to bring a systematic approach to the success of the initiative.</p>		

## Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not	Met

	Met	
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Students within the five at-risk communities will have the opportunity to deepen their personal engagement and increase learning through college- and career ready-standards and opportunities. The proposed project is comprehensive in nature, yet leave room for flexibility and community choice. Good luck to PCS in this exciting endeavor!</p>		
Total	210	163



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0403FL-4 for School Board of Pinellas County

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on prior work in four core educational assurance areas. These are carefully detailed in a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity thorough personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests. This is evidenced in an approach fostering the participating schools to rethink teaching and learning and developing promising personalization strategies worthy of being brought to scale. They aptly chart the components of their approach for personalized learning. These are concisely detailed and cohesively combine: Individualization (adjusting the pace); Differentiation Instruction (adjusting the learning approach); and leveraging student interest/experiences. The Project Organization Chart clearly details its basic components encompassing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frameworks in wall to wall academies.</li> <li>• Adaptive systems for personalized learning in bleed learning strategies</li> <li>• Extended learning in wrap-around services and</li> <li>• Social and emotional support with community partnerships</li> </ul> <p>The applicant efficiently identifies the collaboration of parents and learners in developing the a strategic plan, which to date is serving, and is well positioned to continue serving, to transform teaching, leading, and learning. These are designed to develop personalized learning environments, significantly increase learning and success and advance equity in the initial cohort of 31 schools, located in five at-risk communities throughout the district. They clearly specify their proposed reform initiative builds on the district's five year plan and the vision to improve learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment for all students using a multifaceted approach, based upon proven and research-based models of success. The identified models are clearly detailed and serve as the framework integrating the research- based Career Academy Model at middle and high schools, and the research- based School Wide Enrichment Model at elementary schools. These are identified to facilitate change by realigning existing resources to ensure short-term and long-term success for students through engaged personalized learning environments and the and to develop a strong sense of community belonging, focused on increasing the graduation rate.</p> <p>The applicant succinctly details key components of the plan which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• embracing blended learning strategies;</li> <li>• improving opportunities to access digital content;</li> <li>• providing relevant professional development;</li> </ul>		

establishing a seamlessly integrated data management system that enables communication among educators, students, and parents;

- addressing social emotional needs by partnering with community providers to develop and expand one full service school site in each of the five cluster areas; and
- reforming infrastructure and policies to support personalized learning for each student.

One highlight of the proposed reform initiative focuses on the development of a cross-functional team of district and school-based administrators, teachers and staff collaborating in a program that creates opportunities for students to identify and pursue areas of personal academic interest and prepare every student for college, career, and life. In addition, they copiously detail the program and its strength in building on prior and current work in the four core areas to advance to meet the personal needs of each student and significantly increase learning and success, advancing the district's reform vision and the conviction that effective teachers have the ability to lead all students to college and career readiness.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)

10

10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A. The applicant adequately details an approach to implementing its reform proposal which will support a high-quality district and school-level implementation, clearly outlining the process used to select school and student participants. These collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirement. To support the selection procedures, they detail a recent joint effort of Pinellas County Departments (Health and Human Services, Justice and Consumer Services, Community Development, Economic Development, Code Enforcement, and Planning) who collaborated to identify five at-risk communities. These communities represent 16% or more of their population living at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level. Areas with at least 16% of the population living in poverty were selected as at-risk communities based on the factor or at least one standard deviation above the average poverty rate in Pinellas County. In addition, the low-income individuals residing within these zones account for approximately 45% of the County's total low-income population. These communities are identified as having lower educational attainment and lower wages than the rest of the County; and demonstrate higher rates of incarceration and experience greater risks of homelessness. School selected to participate in the proposed reform initiative are all located within the five high risk zones, and meet all of eligibility requirements. In addition, they assert schools were selected based on their low and underachieving academic performance on state assessments, end of course exams, and student engagement measures of attendance, tardiness, in school and out of school suspension.

B. The applicant provides a list of the schools that will participate in grant activities. these are named and their population and characteristics of the schools charted.

C. The applicant presents data specifying the total number of participating students from low-income families, who are high-need students and participating educators. The total number of participating students is 32,838; total participating students from low-income families is 23,229; and the total participating educators 2,250.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)

10

5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes some procedures through which the proposed reform initiative will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools and will help the district reach its outcome goals to improve student learning. They specify the theory of change to drive their initiative which involves converting 31 schools into full scale, wall to wall academies, pre-academies, and school-wide enrichment model schools. They identify a few of the systems and processes that promote reform, scalability and sustainability, and structures some activities for the four years of the grant period. For example, they propose in year one to assess, plan, train and establish profiles in the 31 participating schools. They identify the fact that the Pinellas County school district is divided into feeder patterns, with its high schools receiving students from area middle and elementary schools.

The applicant defines outcome goals focused on improving student learning which includes enhancing students' behaviors reflected in structures and teaching methods of the reform. They propose the development of a more tightly-knit community to lead to a decrease in discipline problems and improve student attendance. They assert that the academies will over time become the primary initiative to achieve the district's vision and mission for advancing student achievement and 100% program sustainability.

They identify three program goals which are aligned to resources of the business community and the school district in order to exceed the district's graduation rate by 1% each year over the next five years and by 2017 increase the rate to be exceeded by 5% to meet Florida's Next Generation Learning Standards and move each of the sixteen schools towards good standing with National and State of Florida definitions of successful schools and students. Furthermore they anticipate an overarching



goal of having at 100% of all high school students enrolled in a program embracing the academy methodology which will engages personalized learning environments, enhanced digital content, rigorous curricula and career-focused programs that provide relevant contextual learning in order to prepare students for the high-skill, high-wage workplace opportunities.

#### Weaknesses

The applicant lacks details of a coherent and sequenced school reform plan to substantiate their goal focused on the end outcome in which they envision to achieve by the end of the fourth year to fully deploy the program's academies throughout all 31 schools.

Program details are ambiguous and lack clarity and specificity to support their vision and to exponentially increase, scaled up and translate a meaningful reform initiative to support district-wide change by replication throughout the 81 remaining district schools.

The applicant lacks information to adequately detail how the academies specifically align to careers and to the core curriculum and the state mandates related to academic proficiency. In addition, information is lacking to effectively detail how reflective learning serves to advance students learning.

The applicant lacks information to effectively detail any process or procedures to continue and advance the program after the grant period.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6
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#### (A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

A. and B. The applicant documents a program vision which appears likely to result in some improved student learning and performance. This is evidenced in charts detailing performance on summative assessments. They aptly identify the NCLB waiver proposed and accountability measures which includes components that reflect students' academic performance and students' growth with an emphasis on the growth of the lowest performing student. They identify overall annual goals to reduce the number of non-proficient students. They identify their proposed reform initiative will produce a 50% reduction of the level 1 and 2 students by the 2016-2017 school year. For example, detailed information is charted noting the performance on summative assessments, with current proficiency status, or baseline and projected growth. For example, in viewing student performance in one sub group, it is noted that 25% of Black students demonstrate a baseline of proficiency in reading. The applicant targets a 56.25% performance rate by the end of the grant period, given the successful implementation of the proposed activities and supports and resources.

C. The applicant effectively detail a chart listing the baseline graduation rates among students in each sub group and the proposed rate of progress to be attained, given the implementation of the proposed reform initiative. For example, the graduation rate in 2010-2011 among Hispanic students in the target schools was 56.4%. The applicant identifies that as a result of the program activities and support, this rate will increase to 74.14% by the 2016 school year.

(D) The applicant presents a chart listing the overall college enrollment rates, and specific rates among each sub group for 2010-2011. Correlated to this is the proposed increase rate for 2016 school year, based on the implementation of program services and interventions. For example, in 2010-2011, the college enrollment rate among black students was 51%. They propose that, with the interventions and resources and supports to be delivered during the grant period, the college enrollment rate will progress to 67% for Black students.

It is noteworthy that the applicant identifies the fact that the district's launched the Safety Net program, which is a support system for all students. They note that BCHS is one of the district's lowest performing schools that have experienced great success with the Safety Net program, among other interventions and initiatives of the transformation model. In addition, they identify the Safety Net program as encompassing methods which triggers indicators of students needs in real-time which enable staff to design customize learning to address these needs immediately to advance student progress in core areas, and further the graduation rate.

#### Weakness

The applicant lacks information to demonstrate how their program will specifically increase equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals that are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the schools, and overall by student subgroup for each participating school. For example, information related to projected goals is disproportionate in vision for projected growth. This is evidenced in growth levels projected at a higher rate for Native Americans than for white students.

The applicant lacks adequate information and data on the English Learners subgroup.

While the applicant projects growth for students, they lack comparative information to identify state proficiency levels

The applicant lacks an adequate description of an effective monitoring plan to oversee program activities to ensure ongoing progress.

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10

### (B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A. The applicant details a clear record of success over the past 100 years in advancing student learning and academic achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching. They comprehensively detail this progress in: charts, raw student data, and other evidence that demonstrates their proven abilities, over a significant period of time, to effectively improve student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps. This is precisely evidenced in raising student achievement, increasing high school graduation and college enrollment rates. For example, they identify their proud history and place in the education world asserting Pinellas County Schools are proudly celebrating a 100 years of excellence in education. The district initially began with 22 schools and now operates 142 schools and virtual school for 101,997 kindergartens through grade twelve students and 2,833 pre-birth through five children in 24 municipalities. It is the 7<sup>th</sup> largest school district in the state. .

The management team and effective systems have the capacity to utilize data to inform continuous improvement in such areas as professional development, instructional practices, and family engagement. They comprehensively chart a past 4-year track record of advancing student learning and achievement. They chart data demonstrating a steady increase in: graduation and college going rates – rates which exceed the state average. For example, the overall graduation rate in the schools was 71.42% in the 2007-2008 school years and has increase to 80.10 among the 2011 graduation class. They detail success in subgroups as noted in Black students graduation rate in 2007-2008 was 57.83% which increase to 63.81% in the 2011 graduating class. the graduation rate among Hispanic students in 2007-2008 school years was 59.97% and increase to 69.89% among the student in 2011.

The spotlight of the applicant's reform initiative is clearly evidenced in the Career Academy. In 2007, the district's initiated the academies, or the Centers of Excellence in five high schools. With success these have expanded to 16 Centers of Excellence and two Pre-centers of Excellence in 16 high schools today. These provide students with a 21st Century industry-based education leading to the acquisition of a specific demonstrated skill set leading to employment or continuing education. Classes are taught by certified teachers who also hold industry-based credentials or certification specific to the Center of Excellence. Each student leaving a Center of Excellence has the opportunity to earn a traditional diploma, at least one industry certification, and is eligible for a Florida Bright Futures/Gold Seal Scholarship.

B. The applicant effectively details their experience and success in accomplishing significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools and College Rates. They proudly detail a chart demonstrating progress among the persistently lowest school indication that the four district high school received a "D" grade in 2008 and by 2011 tow of the school progressed to a "B" ranking and two of the schools to a "C" ranking.

C. The applicant copiously details procedures and practices through which they make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. This is evidenced in district endeavors to ensure that each school possesses the technology, including hardware, connectivity, and other necessary infrastructure, to provide teachers and students sufficient access to strategic tools for improved classroom instruction and computer-based assessment. They identify that the district is transitioning to online assessment in facilitate performance data will be readily available to students, teachers and parents. The current procedure provides single sign-on access to the Student Information System and many other district resources, through a technology based Active Directory that provides access to: teachers (8,549), support staff (3,249), administrators (443), registered parents (99,809) and students (103,642). In addition the district also uses the Active Directory Federation with the FLDOE to provide access to Sunshine Connections and PEER state systems. They identify working with the FLDOE and state committee on single sign-on to include access to more systems including the Instructional Improvement System locally along with the state-level data downloads to improve instruction in the classroom.

### Weakness

While they assert their district has consistently demonstrated the qualifications and experience to implement a high-functioning comprehensive personalized learning environment for every student, details are lacking to adequately substantiate their assertion.

The applicant lacks specificity in detailing strategies employed to increase equity in learning and teaching.

The applicant presents data that lacks clarity to accurately details their achievement or indicate specific areas of need. In addition, the data presented does not adequately address the achievement gaps related to the proposed reform proposal. The data for the K-12 system only focused on elementary did not show how it would prepare the actual student.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)

5

5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly identifies the fact that the district ensures a high level of transparency in processes, practices, and investments, including by making public, by school, actual school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration. They effectively document information currently made available in the four categories of school-level expenditures from State and local funds. Information is made available on: Actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, Actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only; Actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only; and Actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level. They identify the fact that the Florida Educational Funding Accountability Act has establishes an accountability system that provides a report summarizing administrative expenditures based upon data submitted by each school district in the program cost report. The summary of administrative expenditures per unweighted full-time equivalent students is presented in this report. The information reported is based on the U.S. Census Bureau's classifications used in the F-33 survey of local government finances for the Local Education Agency Finance Survey Data.

The applicant identifies the fact that their school district's Department of Accounting provides comprehensively reports annually to the Florida Department of Education and each school principal to each district's School Financial Report. The purpose of the report is to better inform parents and the public concerning how funds were spent to operate the school during the prior fiscal year. This report is also made available on the school district website.

The applicant clearly and specifically details the fact that the total district revenue is reported at the school, district, and state levels. The revenue sources addressed are state and local funds. Expenditures are reported as total expenditures per student at the school level and the average expenditures per full-time equivalent student at the district and state levels. These are reported by category which include: Teachers; Substitute teachers; Other instructional personnel; Instructional services; School administration; Materials, supplies, and operating capital outlay. In addition, the applicant has included a sample Transparency Report from one of the schools in their district.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant copiously details successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal. This is aptly evidenced in the referencing the timely release of the Florida Statute relating to Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning. This provides successful conditions and sufficient autonomy for the applicant to implement the major reform components of the Academies of Pinellas. The state statute requires districts to provide eligible K-12 public school students with educational options that provide academically challenging curriculum or accelerated instruction. Each school must offer whole grade and mid-year promotion, subject matter acceleration, virtual instruction in higher grade level subjects, and the Credit acceleration Program. The applicant identifies this statute to pave the way for competency based learning.

In compliance with statues and state regulations they identify autonomy and innovation in programming. This is evidenced in district reform endeavors including: STEM coursework; enrichment options; advance content instruction; curriculum compacting; and telescoping curriculum may also be offered. In addition, they identify that student in grades K-5 have flexibility to demonstrate grade level mastery through a district identified acceleration process using the Iowa Assessment Scale including norm referenced testing measures and measures of social and emotional readiness. They identify the fact that currently secondary school student have the option to participate in blended and virtual opportunities to demonstrate mastery and recover courses and credits in which they have been previously unsuccessful. At the other end of the spectrum are accommodations for the option of early graduation for students who have completed a minimum of 24 credits and meets graduation requirements.

Although efforts are underway, to truly implement a competency-based learning system that will allow students to progress at their own pace as they master the subject matter rather progressing after a required amount of seat time, this will require the district to work with the Florida Department of Education on waivers to minimum hour requirements for high school credits.

They reference the fact that approval of this nature has been done previously with Virtual School.

The applicant precisely references the fact that the State of Florida passed the Career and Professional Education Act in 2005 for the purpose of providing a statewide planning partnership between the business and education communities in order to attract, expand and retain targeted, high-value industries and to sustain a strong, knowledge-based economy. This state statute, combined with the district's commitment for 100% student success provides the conditions and autonomy to implement the activities outlined in the proposed initiative. The applicant notes that the Florida State Educational Agency reviewed the Academies of Pinellas project and provided helpful comments which have been hat were incorporated into the project design.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	4
<div>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</div> <div>A. The applicant evidences collaboration with relevant stakeholders as a vital component of decision making. This is evidenced in how teachers, and principals in participating schools have been engaged in the development of the proposal and how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback. For example, they identify meeting with principals from the 31 participating Race to the Top-District schools during a district Leadership Team meeting. Principals provided insight into what teachers and staff are already doing to provide a personalized learning environment at their schools and also gave feedback on gaps and needed resources to further personalize student learning</div> <div>(i) The applicant clearly identifies the involvement of the staff and includes a Summary of the Teacher and Staff Survey staff survey. They reference the ideas and information gathered from the teachers and the staff have guided the proposal development by: identifying needs and gaps and highlighting existing programs and practices. They specify having the support of the superintendent, district leadership, region administrators, principals, and the Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association. They clearly identify the teachers association signed the Race to the Top Memorandum of Understanding and the fact that they supports the district's Teacher Incentive Fund project. Representatives from PCTA have been invited to participate in the ongoing meetings related to development of the project plan. Individual conferences with the union president and Executive Director related to the proposed project also occurred throughout development. They assert the district will continue this working relationship with PCTA representatives to ensure the successful implementation of the Academies of Pinellas Project. To ensure effective dissemination, the four Area Superintendents personally contacted the staff in their respective schools with 509 staff members responding to the survey..</div> <div>B. Letters of support from such key stakeholders as parents and parent organizations, student organizations, early learning programs, tribes, the business community, civil rights organizations, advocacy groups, local civic and community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education. This is evidenced in parent and student support is represented in a letter from the PSTA organization. The Pinellas Education Foundation has also included a letter of support. The Foundation operates with the mission to enhance and improve educational opportunities in Pinellas County Schools. Since its establishment in 1986, the Foundation has successfully launched two of the Stavros Institute's legacies, reaching 23,000 fifth grade and eighth grade students through its Enterprise Village and Finance Park programs. The Education Foundation and local businesses fully support the project's expansion and enhancement. Letters of support from faithfully supportive community and business stakeholders are included.</div> <div>Weakness:</div> <div>The applicant states that a letter of collaboration from the teachers union is included. However, evidence of this MOU is not provided. The applicant does not clearly demonstrate the existence of a letter for MOU from the teachers union in direct support of the RTTT D grant, or if a bargaining unit does not exist, they do not clearly assert that they have surveyed at least 70% of the specified staff. Therefore, it is unclear of the specific support from the union in the design off this program and proposal.</div> <div>While the applicant states the district will continue this working relationship with PCTA representatives to ensure the successful implementation of the Academies of Pinellas Project, no evidence is detailed in the narrative, nor defined in a letter or MOU.</div> <div>While the applicant includes approximately twenty letters of support, these letters appear to be general support letters and lack specificity of any individual activities or contribution to the program .</div> <div>The applicant lacks the most current data to substantiate gaps and needs. For example, data provided is referenced from 2009-2010.</div> <div>The applicant lacks evidence of parent and student input into the design of the program.</div>		

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant details a well-developed plan for an analysis of the current status in implementing personalized learning environments and the logic behind the reform proposal contained within the proposal, including identified needs and gaps that the plan references a cross-functional team of district and school-based administrators, teachers and staff who conducted a thorough analysis of the district's current programs and practices, relevant to personalized learning. The results of the analysis indicated that the current status of personalized learning in the district is disconnected, evidencing isolated pockets of personalization occurring with no comprehensive and consistent practices or reform supports currently in place. To document the needs and gaps, they specify conducting a series of stakeholder forums and surveys to gather a concrete assessment of the needs. During these session input and insight was gathered garnered from responses to a series of pertinent questions. The result of these questions revealed needs focused on: the personalized learning environment; training opportunities; technology; smaller groups; flexible scheduling; planning time; utilizing digital tools for instruction and student data assessment and formative Assessment Skills.</p> <p>The applicant aptly asserts that the Pinellas County faces substantial challenges to its future workforce. The demographic shift taking place in the working population is not unique to this area, but the response to this challenge will either serve as a competitive advantage or serious obstacle to economic development efforts. As the Pinellas economy continues to change, it becomes increasingly important to have an educated workforce for long-term vitality. In response they detail how the district and the community have been responding and reference this need to frame their initiative.</p> <p>They assert, to ensure the reform is implemented in each school in a manner that promotes optimal personalization, an in depth needs assessment of each school will be conducted by experts in Academy Model Implementation. They specify that at the start of the grant, each school's leadership team will attend Academy Model School Conference, and receive personalized needs assessment data from Academy consultants to determine the best academy offerings for their school population. The assessment services will include surveys of teachers and students, onsite training, strategic planning, and initial and continuous consultation. The detail the fact that the district and project staff will work with each school to review results of the needs assessment, analyze data, and develop a detailed scope of work to ensure program success in meeting identified needs and progress toward goals.</p> <p>Weakness</p> <p>While they identify the school's leadership team attending an Academy Model School Conference, information is lacking detailing how information from this conference will e shared with teachers and support staff who are engaged in the day to day instruction of students in the academies.</p> <p>The information presented is very general and lacks specificity on strategies to address the gaps in each of the subgroups.</p> <p>The applicant presents information and data from the feeder schools and lacks details or charts of data for the entire targeted service area.</p>		

### C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A. (i) The applicant narrates a comprehensive plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. They clearly detail an adequate plan which is evidenced- based and positioned to assess its effectiveness on learning specifically for high-need students, in an age-appropriate manner. The applicant's approach is detailed to engage the support of parents and educators focused on instilling in all students an understand that what they are learning serves as a key factor to their success in accomplishing their goals. This is concisely evidenced in the Academy Model which provides students with an understanding of what they are learning, its reasons and applications. The applicant specifies the Academy approach was designed to address the needs of many young people who have been disengaged and disenfranchised in schools because they do not see the relevance in what they are learning. One factor in the Academy approach is "student choice" as critical to the success and development of the Academies. This unique approach providing distinctive programs in each of the schools which allow students to choose a focus that most interests them. In addition, they (ii) The applicant details a well-developed approach to instruction and learning which facilitates programs, services and supports which personalize and advance each student's progress in developing goals linked to college- and career-ready standards, or college- and career-ready graduation requirements. This is evidenced in clear descriptions of the Academies of Pinellas Framework. For example, they identify that all</p>		

students in the target schools will receive a k-12 continuum of college and career education. The preparation for this is scheduled to begin at the elementary level with the School-wide Enrichment Model (SEM) providing an introduction to career exploration and advancing exploration in the pre-academies in middle school. This background serves to prepare students for the final phase of scaffolding, High School Academies. The elementary and middle school initial preparation stages and their components areas are succinctly listed and detailed. For example, the applicant details that middle school pre-academies are identical to their high school counterparts, facilitating small learning communities focused on a career technical program or theme. They specify that a major benefit of the academy or pre-academy model is that students share a cohort of teachers who work together for the purpose of promoting rigor/relevance and relationships. Outcomes measures for the academies are detailed. For example, at the middle school level, outcomes include: Engagement; Acceleration; Elimination of the Achievement Gaps and further achievement, social/ emotional Progress. The proposed plan specifies times, staff and opportunities for students to reflect upon goals linked to college and career ready standards, and guides learning based on identified interests and styles. They note the program implementation schedule and state that in August 2013, each learner will begin developing a plan. This plan, its activities and goals will be updated throughout the student's academic career. In addition, they identify the fact that the district is in the process of examining and selecting viable options for the learner profiles, learning plans and career plans

(iii) The Academies are copiously detailed and evidence providing opportunities and support to enable every student to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interests. This is detailed, noting that every student is assigned staff to assist with their selection of an academy, based on personal interest. In turn, academic and career curriculum will be delivered using blended learning options and digital content. Most importantly, every student is scheduled to receive both a personalized learning plan and a career plan.

(iv) The applicant details instructional strategies and student learning advances that foster their mastery of critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving. This is evidenced in students guidance through engaging and interactive assessments as they complete a process of self-discovery and career exploration. They specify that their propose initiative advances students to learn how to be effectively prepared for the world of work, and how o become better consumers, and the importance of targeting occupations that are in high demand. hey aptly detail strategies that foster students progress through the elementary grades, emphasizing more project-based learning to leverage their interests and guide career exploration. One specific innovative learning model is evidenced in students exposure to a variety of middle school pre-academy options. These provide increased opportunities for blended learning enriched through the use of multiple on-line resources to pull together all areas of the curriculum during particular projects spread across the school year. The projects are specified as aligned to the common core state standards, and enable student to demonstrate mastery of learning.

(v) The applicant details opportunities for student to master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving. This is evidenced in a program goal to secure that learners have the skills, traits, and knowledge to choose and use the appropriate tools and resources to support, manage, and monitor progress of their own individual learning. The objectives are clearly aligned to attaining this goals is aptly specified as focused on learners using the appropriate tools and resources to develop skills to support their learning and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.

B (i) the applicant clearly details the support of parents and educators to ensure that each student has access to a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable each student with the sills, resources and support to achieve his or her individual learning goals and ensure on time graduation and college- and career-ready. This is evidenced in goal two, which is specified for earners to be able to access and use high-quality digital content and adaptive systems for delivery of the academy programs and core curriculum content.

The applicant identifies the first objective in attaining this goal is for educators and parents to collaborate in providing training and support to ensure that learners understand how to use the tools and resources to support, monitor and manage their learning. Furthermore, the applicant identifies one activities aligned to this goal is for learners and parents to work together with school staff in updating the child's learning plan goals and career plans based on newly acquired information and skills throughout the school year as a result of recommended personalized career recommendations, aligned to mastery of core content.

(ii) The applicant copious details a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments integral to their reform initiative. This is evidenced in teachers meeting on a regular basis to plan and develop projects or units of study that focus on the themes bringing relevance and adaptive software to deliver the digital content for core courses and specialty academies. This digital curriculum comprises core standards-based instructional content specifically developed for online and scaffolds supportive learning for all students, and resources for high quality leaning and effective appropriate blended learning models within the coursework.

iii) The applicant succinctly detail a program showcasing high-quality content, including digital learning content aligned with college- and career-ready standards ad college- and career-ready graduation requirements. This is evidenced in the district collaborating with the Pinellas Education Foundation who is currently creating the Future Plans program which is focused on bridging the gap between K-12 studies and career planning. The Future Plans program is being created to be custom stand-alone interactive software program created for eleventh grade students in schools throughout the county. The applicant asserts that one the program is successfully launched; it could become an established component in the high school curriculum for every student in the county schools. In addition, the indicate the potential is far-reaching for this program since it is designed to be replicated statewide or even to national audiences. The highlights of this program focus on students being guided through engaging and interactive assessments as they complete a

process of self-discovery and career exploration. The program advances students preparation for the world of work, and how to become better consumers, and the importance of targeting occupations that are in high demand.

(iv) A. The applicant details a plan that encompasses ongoing and regular feedback, including frequently updated individual student data that can be used to determine progress toward mastery of college- and career-ready standards, or college- and career-ready graduation requirements. For example, the applicant specifies assessment strategies in the early grades which are focused on ensuring that every student establishes a solid foundation for learning. This will include multiple sources of assessments targeting specific levels to adjust instruction appropriately with individual, personalized plans for each student and with classes scheduled with specific matching interventions and teachers to accelerate learning opportunities for students. Parents will be a big part of this process as both supporters of learning as well as monitoring of student work at home. In addition, they identify that technology will be used to bridge the gaps between home and school and will also provide additional learning time for students outside of the regular classroom day. They also note, that in addition to the academic assessments used to guide instruction, interest inventories will be used to group students with similar interests. These multiple data sources are clearly identify to aptly provide meaningful; information to staff to determine how the instructional pace will be individualized, and how the learning approaches will need to be differentiated, and blended into learning opportunities.

Weaknesses:

(iv)The applicant lacks information to adequately detail venues and opportunities through which students have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning.

(v) The applicant lacks adequate information to adequately detail specific accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements

The applicant lacks details to delineate and effective describe how their approach specifically implements instructional strategies for all participating students to enable their pursuit of a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards, and college- and career-ready graduation requirements, and opportunities to accelerate learning through support which addresses their individual needs. For example, the applicant makes general statements about implementation, but does not provide details or specificity activities or strategies to describe this endeavor.

Information is lacking to support the applicant's assertion related to district's commitment to adjusting policy and procedures, and student's assignment and transportation accommodations.

The applicant lacks information to detail any level of support from parents.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	14
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A. (i) The applicant copiously addresses the criteria related to effective teaching and learning detailing a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. This plan includes an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements and accelerate his or her learning through support of his or her needs. This is evidenced in an approach to teaching and leading that assists educators in improving instruction and increasing their capacity to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements by enabling the full implementation of personalized learning and teaching for all students. This is highlighted in the programs provision of strategies and opportunities for all participating educators to engage in effective and meaningful training, and in professional teams to support their individual and collective capacity to advance students learning. One focus in this real is support for the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student's academic needs and help ensure all students can graduate on time and college- and career-ready. This is clearly evidence in the district's history of offering extensive professional learning opportunities for personnel. For example, the current professional development system includes job embedded instructional coaches, professional learning communities, Individual Professional Development Plans, and job specific course offerings. They specify that during the last school year 797 courses were offered and that 119,663 participants reported a total of 166,177 training completions. Of note, the applicant references the challenge in offering professional learning is focusing on priorities that will have the most powerful effect upon student achievement while offering opportunities that meet the diverse needs of instructional staff and leaders.

(ii) The applicant details strategies and approaches to adapt content and instruction, and provide opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks, in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches. This is evidenced in the applicant's identification of the purpose of the professional development system is to support the continual growth and development of teachers and leaders in order to positively impact student achievement. The district's professional development system includes a component focused on district priorities common to all schools while still allowing an avenue for individual and school professional learning needs to be addressed. They reference research to support

their approach citing the most powerful way to improve student achievement is through the continual development and growth of teachers and leaders. Related to the propose endeavor professional learning is critical to the implementation of a personalized learning system. They propose a professional learning plan for the implementation of a system of personalized learning focuses on building the knowledge and skills of instructional and administrative staff in the thirty-one target schools. This training will build advancing the implementation of personalized learning and to support to serve the differentiated needs of each student in each school.

B (i) All participating educators have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. Those resources include actionable information that helps educators identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests. This is evidenced most appropriately at the secondary level specifying timeline for professional learning which is developed by each school based upon the initial needs assessment and their school's current implementation of Academies. They assert that initial learning will focuses on a conceptual

understanding of academies and personalized learning and on methodology and skills for successful implementation. In addition they succinctly detail staff learning will focus on effective use of digital learning and adaptive learning tools.

(ii) The applicant addresses a plan that includes high-quality learning resources including digital resources that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements and the tools to create and share new resources. For example, they identify the professional learning of administrators which initially focuses on how to understand and implement change within a school building. In addition, it will incorporate helping leaders know how to work with staff in identifying personal beliefs about teaching and their students, including elements of how to build culturally responsive schools and classrooms and how to deeply know students and their needs.

(c) (i) The applicant identifies that all participating school leaders and school leadership teams will have training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements. The training, policies, tools, data, and resources must include Information, from such sources as the district's teacher evaluation system that helps school leaders and school leadership teams assess, and take steps to improve, individual and collective educator effectiveness and school culture and climate, for the purpose of continuous school improvement. They identify that next summer all administrators will participate in a summer retreat with the purpose of building a professional network of support as well as building knowledge of change and methods and strategies for working with staff to understand their own beliefs about students and their learning. In addition, the administrators' professional learning will build conceptual understanding of personalized learning and how to successfully create a school-wide model, followed by learning around the methodology and skill in building staff and school capacity for full implementation.

Weaknesses

The applicant lacks information to detail any program rational or approach that details their vision or understanding to an integral element in teaching and leading incorporates frequently measuring student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements and use data to inform both the acceleration of student progress and the improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators.

(iv) The applicant lacks adequate information to detail strategies to improve teachers' and principals' practices and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the LEA's teacher and principal evaluation systems including frequent feedback on individual and collective effectiveness, as well as by providing recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed

D. The applicant lacks information to adequately details a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects and specialty areas.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
A. The applicant details an infrastructure to adequately maintain project implementation through comprehensive policies and practices to provide participating educators, and levels of the education system with the support and resources they need. This is evidenced in practices and procedures that facilitate personalized learning through a well-developed and operational central office governance structure to provide support and services to all participating schools. For example, they detail their current organizational infrastructure as encompass the capacity to sustain a multi-level framework of		



support for schools and staff and programs. This includes a clear description of the Superintendent and a highly qualified and experienced team of educators whose focus is on helping schools meet the district vision of 100% student success. They concisely detail the responsibilities of the superintendent for the overall management of all level schools in their designated areas. In addition an overview of the job description and responsibilities of key managerial staff are aptly narrated including an Associate Superintendent, Teaching and Learning Services works directly with the Superintendent and Area Superintendents in developing systematic approaches to evaluate and improve teaching and learning with a focus on closing the achievement gaps and increasing student academic success.

The applicant concisely presents an overview of additional key managerial staff including the Executive Director, PreK-12 Core Curriculum whose responsibility it is to support the needs of all schools by advocating, facilitating, and monitoring the alignment of district curriculum, instruction, assessment, and improvement initiatives supporting the goals of the District Strategic Plan.

B. The applicant aptly specifies a site based management to facilitate school leadership teams in participating schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school-level budgets. This is appropriately detailed in an overview of members of each school leadership team afforded flexibility and autonomy in school management in alignment with the district's strategic plan. For example, they convincingly detail the Academies of Pinellas, in their reform initiative to build on the existing well developed framework to best address the needs identified at each school. One example of evidenced of school level r autonomous articulation in detailed in each individualized school schedule and calendar to facilitate the extension of the learning day and year to include before and after school instruction, summer programs.

C. The applicant details a reform initiative that highlight the autonomous school leadership infrastructure as exemplified in strategies and procedures that give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic. For example, the reference a Florida Statute related to Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning with opportunities for each district to provide eligible K-12 public school students with educational options that provide academically challenging curriculum or accelerated instruction. In this each school offers whole grade and mid-year promotion, subject matter acceleration, virtual instruction in higher grade level subjects, and the Credit Acceleration Program.

D. The applicant clearly details providing students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways; and In addition, they reference in options and flexibility for each school to advance content instruction, curriculum compacting, and telescoping curriculum. In this realm they cite student in grades K-5 have flexibility to demonstrate grade level mastery through a district identified acceleration process using the Iowa Assessment Scale including norm referenced testing measures and measures of social and emotional readiness. In addition, they details the fact that current students at the secondary level have the opportunity to participate in blended and virtual opportunities to demonstrate mastery and recover courses and credits in which they have been previously unsuccessful. They also detail providing the option of early graduation in less than 8 semesters when a student has completed a minimum of 24 credits and meets graduation requirements.

E. The applicant presents a well-developed program that provides learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. Information presented supports the applicant's commitment to implementing effective research-based teaching and learning strategies and processes which support the teaching of all subgroups, specifying the district serves approximately 17,074 students who have been diagnosed with disabilities and approximately 6,201 students who have been assessed as gifted learners. They assert the fat that they district provides a full continuum of services, which include but are not limited to educational, vocational and behavioral support, to meet student's needs, which are carefully coordinate to access to general education instruction with non-disabled peers. They identify the fact that students with disabilities are provided instruction in the general education curriculum to the extent they are able to participate and progress, noting the coordination of accommodations in respect to each students' Individual Education Plan (IEP). They identify the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program in the district which is designed to meet the diverse needs of English language learners (ELLs) who come from home environments in which the native language is other than English. These students may have difficulty understanding, speaking, reading, and writing the English language without additional support. Current ESOL program services represent more than 80 languages. They specify that ELL students receive their language arts instruction from ESOL certified teachers using research-based, effective teaching methods. In addition, bilingual assistants help students in all subject area classes and provide assistance to families with home/school communications.

They specify that the Academies of Pinellas project will address all demographics of the population including students with disabilities and English Language Learners. To accomplish this they designate the program team will work collaboratively with the Exceptional Student Education Department, Student Services, Dropout Prevention, the English Speakers of Other Languages Office and subject area departments to ensure adaptation to benefit every student. A variety or learning resources will be offered and teachers will receive professional development to personalize learning for all students. They also specify that hardware and software applications for increased accessibility will be utilized and materials and presentation modes will be modified to address any physical or sensory barriers specific to the needs of the program participant. This is identified to include program materials translated as needed and other modifications to assure full inclusion.

#### Weakness

Details are lacking to identify procedures and avenues through which parents and student can export information to align their support. In addition, avenues for stakeholders to export relevant data is not identified. Such access to information appear to be integral to garnering the support of all

stakeholders. While they state that community members have equitable access to project activities and materials, details are lacking to ensure this.

The applicant appears very more focused on meeting state standards that effectively addressing strategies to ensure that each participating student meets state standards.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A. The applicant presents a plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources they need. This is evidenced in an adequate description of Policy & Systems reform which will build capacity for blended learning within the walls of the school and beyond. In this they reference the Florida Digital Learning Now Act, passed in May 2011, which requires all school districts to establish virtual instruction options for students. This Act authorizes blended learning courses and requires full-time & part-time school district virtual instruction program options. In accordance with the mandates of this, all Florida students entering 9th grade are directed to complete at least one course through online learning as part of the graduation requirement. Asserting their understanding of the need for students and their families to have adequate Internet access the district, they provide an example of serving students in the dropout prevention program. This example detail the district's operation of the Pinellas Virtual School which currently provides access through AirCards on a check-out basis. In addition, they note the expense of online learning and to this they detail the district's Networking and Telecommunications Department coordinating with the area's Bright House Networks to offer students qualifying for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, monthly high speed internet access for \$9.95 and \$150.00 for a laptop or desktop computer.

Of note, a cost-effective innovation is detailed which strategically implements a 1:1 student laptop/tablet ratio, in a Bring Your Own Device/Technology program, which allows students to bring their own computers to school.

B. The applicant documents policies and procedures which ensure all students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support. This is evidenced in offering free digital literacy training online, which is made possible through funding by Connect to Compete, a national nonprofit organization.

Weakness

C. Information is lacking detailing district's information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems to personalize and advance students progress.

D. The applicant lacks information to address the criteria related to ensuring that LEAs and schools use interoperable data systems. Details are lacking to adequately describe any of their district's systems that could include human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data.

Details are lacking to substantiate the applicant's assertion that the schools' infrastructures supports personalized learning by ensuring that all participating students, parents, and stakeholder, regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools and other learning resources both in and out of school to support program implementation.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant asserts their initiative provides a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant. They substantiate this by evidencing the fact that their school serves at the forefront of continuous quality improvement since the late 1990's and highlights recent endeavors toward continuous improvement in establishing Smaller Learning Communities in 2003. They highlight their Career Education Board, and the Pinellas Education Foundation as serving as the focal point for moving their secondary schools in preparing students to be college and career ready. They identify the proposed initiative to advance the Academies of Pinellas to improve learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment for all students, by scaling up the Academy Model in the 31 participating schools, and eventually, district-wide. They identify the end goal that by 2016, each of the eight high schools to house Wall to Wall Academies, and nine middle schools will house Pre- Academies, and the elementary schools will implement the School-wide Enrichment Model.

The applicant succinctly identifies an annual improvement process for participating schools, as evidenced in the School Improvement Plans whereby teams develop budgets, calendars, professional development, and action plans based on data relative to their school. Schools will also develop, review, and adjust their detailed Scope of Work for implementing the Academies of Pinellas project.

#### Weakness

The applicant lacks information detailing meaningful strategies and avenues in which to publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top District grant.

The applicant lacks specific information on a timeframe for monitoring goals. For example, they state they will regularly monitor progress. The word regular is general and lacks specificity to note monthly, quarterly or annual monitoring. In addition, information presented in this section is quite vague. For example they state the program mandates will work with staff to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and remediation. However they do not provide a design of strategies to be used by the project manager in this.

The applicant lacks information to delineate specify strategies through which remediation will occur to address students needs.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)

5

4

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant effectively details a well-developed plan encompassing strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. This is evidenced in their reference to the tact of the district's Office of Strategic Communications which house both internal and external communications in one department, to align with best practices. In addition, they identify the operation of an Office of Strategic Partnerships which strives to formalize relationships between the district, schools and the community to bring resources together to support student success. This office is cited as working closely with all departments and schools throughout the district to create and disseminate clear and consistent messages to all stakeholders. This office is detailed in using established strategies to assist in crafting and sending communications to all stakeholders regarding Academies of Pinellas information.

A Public Information Officer is employed in this office that will be responsible to assist in communicating Academies of Pinellas information to media through press releases and the dissemination of story, photo and video opportunities. In addition they detail the office's use of a variety of systems to communicate to internal and external stakeholders. For example, these include: a *Friday Update* newsletter to Pinellas School Board members and a *Monday Update* newsletter to all staff; the School Messenger telecommunications system for communicating with parents; WPDS TV-14, a television station licensed since 1988 to Pinellas County Schools by the Federal Communications Commission; the district website, [www.pcsb.org](http://www.pcsb.org); and several annual publications that include a parents' resource guide, a media guide, an internal communications guide and a fast facts brochure. They indicate that in striving to always improve communications to internal and external stakeholders, the OSC has created an advisory group including district leaders, principals, teachers, support staffers and parents, who are consulted on a regular basis regarding communication issues and projects.

The applicant also details the endeavors of the Office of Strategic Planning who engages stakeholders through a variety of methods including: a Parent Advocacy Program; Community Advisory Boards; organizations of community and business partnerships; a Speaker's Bureau; and a Family and Community Liaison program that assists schools in building partnerships and fostering relationships in the community.

#### Weakness

Information is lacking to evidence the fact that parents are actually consulted on a regular basis. In addition, they lack specification of a time frame in reference to quantifying a time frame to define what they mean by regular basis.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)

5

2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant concisely charts program information which evidences a clear approach to continuously improve its plan through listing baseline data and projected growth over 5 years. Their approach incorporates ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required applicant-proposed performance measures. For example, they present various charts which specify measures to provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success. These include charting performance measures for grades 9 through 12, identifying the baseline and a targeted 50% increase in six years for students to be on track for college and career readiness. In this they propose program services and resources will increase student success on SAT. In the area of mathematics, students demonstrate a baseline of 34% success in math SAT and propose that by year six for 67% of students to demonstrate proficiency.

The applicant references the fact that their proposed program meets the RTTT D requirement for developing and conducting principal evaluation system noting that the Florida Statutes has followed a timetable for implementing a principal evaluation system based on student achievement. They provide details that the Principal Evaluation system uses student performance data was approved by the State Board of Education. In this they assert that highly effective principal data will be collected beginning the 2012-2013 school year.

The applicant effectively charts data detailing the number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup whose teacher of record and principal are an effective teacher and effective principals. For example, or all participating they identify a 1.30% which is projected over five years to increase to 20%

The applicant details 12 performance measures which aptly present baseline data for all students in grades K-12 focused on academic performance and college and career readiness. The charts include details of the number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup. One example, encompasses information on students in grades 9-12 detailing. For example, they provide data on the number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, which are on track to college- and career-readiness based on the applicant's on-track indicator. The chart identifies, in reading that of all students 49.% are on track and propose by 2017 for 74.55% to be on track

#### Weaknesses

The applicant lacks information to detail their rationale for selecting performance measures.

The applicant lacks information on strategies detailing how they will review and improve the measures over time.

The applicant lacks any information on the number and percentage of participating students who complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
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#### (E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant precisely details plans to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top – District funded activities, such as professional development and activities that employ technology, and to more productively use time, staff, money, or other resources in order to improve results. The applicant define "Evaluation" as the systematic collection of information about activities, characteristics, and outcomes of projects to make judgments about the project, improve effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming. They propose to conduct a comprehensive multi-year evaluation of the Academies of Pinellas project in order to determine the extent of program implementation and program effectiveness. They designate responsible persons for program evaluation activities who include: Project Manager, leadership teams, and project staff to work in collaboration with the Research Specialist to implement the evaluation and report on results. The evaluation process is focused on producing data to provide the project manager with well-documented evidence to support continuous improvement. They assert a logic model will guide the evaluation planners to determine how the project should work.

They aptly details evaluation plan will feature two complementary strategies: formative and summative. In turn they detail a question approach to gather formative data to focus on internal program issues. Correlated to this is summative information which captures the outcome related information associated with attainment of project objectives at the end of the service cycle. This summative information will be used by the internal project management team for public reporting of project success and to give a measure of project effectiveness over the course of service delivery through a comparative analysis of intended and observed results.

Project staff will work with evaluators to monitor benchmarks to measure progress on a regular basis. The research specialist, program coordinator, leadership teams, and program staff will review baseline and incremental data quarterly to update school leadership on project progress towards meeting objectives and inform decisions about implementation of the project. This evaluation approach creates a cycle of feedback to state, local and program management. It also quantifies program impact which will be used for public empowering accountability.

#### Weakness

While the applicant provides an overview of the inter working of the evaluation process, details are lacking to specify how or through what measures evaluation data will be collected, analyzed and reported. For example, details are lacking identifying a specific technology based instrument utilized in the evaluation process.

# F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant details a budget, budget narrative and tables that clearly identifies all funds that will support the project and appear to be reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposed program. applicant's proposal; and</p> <p>Information presented in the budget provides an adequate description of all of the funds that the applicant will use to support the implementation of the proposal, including total revenue from these sources.</p> <p>The applicant identification of the funds that will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during and after the grant period, as described in the proposed budget and budget narrative, with a focus on strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments.</p> <p>Weaknesses</p> <p>The applicant lacks information to detail the thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities outlined in the budget.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant concisely details a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant, specifying support from state and local government leaders. They purposefully assert that one of the important characteristics of the Academies of Pinellas plan is the sustainability through community/business/civic involvement. This is aptly detailed in the Career Education Board, the Pinellas Education Foundation, and longtime existing community partners who continue to demonstrate their financial, intellectual and personal commitment to career academies. For example, they define the work and commitment of Dr. Gus A. Stavros who started the foundation in 1988. They document that over the years the Pinellas Education Foundation has raised more than \$110 million to support the students and teachers in the schools and is consistently ranked among the top public school education foundations in the United States.</p> <p>Dedicated to program sustainability, the applicant details their history of dedication to innovative endeavors to advance student learning. For example, the school district has demonstrated its commitment to career academies and to centers of excellence by making them a clear priority in Carl D. Perkins funding applications and resource allocation and is committed to continuing that effort. In addition they note that they have now begun to designate Title I, School Improvement Grant and Race To The Top resources to further bolster the academy initiative. Lastly, another strong commitment to sustaining the Academies of Pinellas is identified in the Pinellas County School Board unanimously approving the proposed plan, with annual mandatory updates, insuring its sustainability and viability over the next five years and beyond.</p> <p>The applicant copiously lists sources of financial support, delineating support from: Government and private sector grants; Community involvement to include time and resources; Businesses; Local and National Foundations; Professional Organizations; PTA's and Alumni Associations; Civic Groups. Correlated to these are internal resources noted in dedicating capital outlay and reallocating textbook adoption costs to fund Digital Learning Software Licenses and district in-kind fund for professional development.</p>		

# Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: <p>1. The applicant presents an overview of information to substantiate the propped initiative to address the competitive preference priority by providing general information of a coherent and sustainable partnership that it has formed with public or private organizations. This is evidenced in a general assertion that they are Identifying interventions that address the non-academic barriers to learning are an essential component for the success of the reform effort. To this end they reference recognizing the fact that students learn best in a safe, healthy and drug free environment, and that the district is committed to assuring provision of such an environment. They assert that strong systemic support of this is reflected in the district's strategic directions focusing on student achievement, student services, and a safe learning environment. They also reference an expanding body of research that</p>		

demonstrates that social emotional learning is integral to the academic learning that takes place in effective schools. In support of the reform proposal the academies implements four step processes to address non-academic barriers to learning and the social emotional needs of students. To this end they make a general statement asserting they district engaging in excellent collaborative relationships with many community entities and providers including school-based neighborhood centers who will bring together community resources, neighbors and schools to promote the health and well-being of students and their families.

2. The applicant charts eight population-level desired results for students in the LEA that align with and support the applicant’s broader Race to the Top – District proposal. These results include both educational results and other education outcomes and family and community supports. for example, the identify a primary age population ad t target their educational needs to increase the number of stunts who enter kindergarten and exhibit school readiness.

3) The applicant identifies a partnership with the community foundation to support the implementation and advancement of programs to address students needs and bring resources to challenge their interest and strengths. For example, procedures are in place to track the selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregate level for all children within the LEA at the student level for the participating students. In addition, the clearly details the use of data to target its resources in order to improve results for participating students with special emphasis on students facing significant challenges, such as students with disabilities and English Language Learners and for all students over time

4. The applicant effectively describe how the partnership would, within participating schools integrate education and other services for participating students. This is detailed in steps, noting the first step in the plan to meet social emotional needs will be a gap analysis of current services provided within the school and the community. They clearly state this will be accomplished y by examining the available services the district, they will be able to determine where the system succeeds and where the system fails to positively impact student learning. This initial analysis is specified to include surveys, focus groups and a review of existing resources through community asset mapping in each of the five cluster areas to examine the gap between the expressed needs of the community and accessible services. The time frame is identified to be conducted within the first six months of receiving this grant, by the department of student services along with the Assessment, Accountability, and Research Department.

5. Throughout the sections of the proposal, the applicant describe how the schools will build the capacity of staff in participating schools by providing them with tools and supports to assess the needs and assets of participating students that are aligned with goals for improving the education.

6. The applicant details information and data, specifically identifying its annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures for the proposed population-level. for example,they clearly define goals and strategies to advance stunts performance in elementary,middle and high school. this is evidenced in building success in the high school academies and then progressing a program design into pre-academy initiative in the middle school

Weaknesses

The applicant lacks information to adequately and specifically identify coherent and sustainable partnership that it has formed with public or private organizations. In addition, specific details are lacing to define the level of support from the teachers union.

The applicant lacks information detailing the development of a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students to at least other high-need students over time.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant addresses the Absolute Priority at a medium level.

They detail a reform initiative which addresses strategies to build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements; accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student; increase the effectiveness of educators; expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps across student groups; and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers. These are carefully detailed in a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity thorough personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests. This is evidenced in an approach fostering the participating schools to rethink teaching and learning and developing promising personalization strategies worthy of being brought to scale.

They aptly chart the components of their approach for personalized learning. These are concisely detailed and cohesively combine: Individualization (adjusting the pace); Differentiation Instruction (adjusting the learning approach); and leveraging student interest/experiences.

Total	210	139
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